



LEARNING ACTIVITY COLLECTING AND USING ANECDOTAL RECORDS

EXAMPLES AND NONEXAMPLES

Activity overview: In this practice activity, you will select descriptive, factual anecdotal notes from pairs of examples and nonexamples.

Directions: Read the following pairs of observation notes. Which notes are written objectively? Circle the letter of the note that uses only facts rather than opinions or assumptions.

1. House center:

- A. Janna imitates teachers in house center—stirs dried beans in pot on toy stove, pretends to feed dolls with spoon, covers dolls in cradle with blankets. Stayed with activity 8 minutes.
- B. Janna loves to imitate teachers in house center as they work throughout day. Temperament very easygoing—seems to display much patience with learning new activities. Stayed with activity for long time.

2. Guest reader:

- A. Kevin—slower to warm up than other children. Parent came in, read children books, and sat on floor with them. Kevin did not want to be near her.
- B. Kevin's reaction to unfamiliar adult—parent came to read books to the children. Kevin usually sits close to book and reader, but today he sat far from parent and stayed close to me.

3. Dress-up:

- A. Amy, Jamil, and Nora in dramatic play area. Very active. Love to explore their environment. Very cooperative. Like to play and explore a lot, but they especially love the dress-up clothes.
- B. Dramatic play area: Amy, Jamil, and Nora look through props and dress-up clothes. Try on dress-up clothes most of time in area. Talk about getting dressed up to go to a party—put on dresses, high heels, vest, bowtie—then look at themselves in mirror. Share dress-up clothes without conflicts. Play for 15 minutes.

Adapted from "Guidelines for Accurate and Objective Recording—Behavioral Descriptions," Learning from Assessment (LFA) Toolkit.





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COLLECTING AN ANECDOTAL RECORD

Activity overview: In this practice activity, you will watch a video clip of two girls painting at an easel. You will observe the children's social relationships to see how they do at cooperating and using socially appropriate behavior. Then you will watch the short clip again and write about what you observed. When you have finished writing, double-check to be sure you have included all the parts of an anecdotal record: date and time, setting, child's name, and objective description.

Directions:

1. Watch the *Anecdotal Records – Art Activity* video clip in the Learning Activity presentation. You will want to focus on how the children participate cooperatively and constructively with one another. Listen to what they say to one another and watch what they do.
2. Watch the video clip again and write an anecdotal record.
 - What did you observe about the girls' social relationships? Think about how they did at cooperating. How did they do at using socially appropriate behavior such as sharing, helping and taking turns?
 - Be sure to write down facts rather than opinions or assumptions. Avoid making a judgment or guessing.
 - Use the *Tools for Teachers Anecdotal Record Notecards*.
3. Check your practice anecdotal record.
 - Have you included the setting?
 - Have you written an objective description of what you saw and heard?
 - If you had made this observation in your own classroom, you would also have included the child's names and the date and time.





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CLASSROOM SCENARIO

Activity overview: In this practice activity, you will read a short classroom scenario. Then you will decide how the teacher might change her teaching to better help the children progress.

Directions: Read the following description of a classroom in which sheets of labels are used to collect observations of children's behavior. How might the teacher change her teaching to better help the children progress in gross motor skill development?

Crystal is the teacher in a classroom of 20 children. She and her teacher aide Ellen use sheets of labels to write down their observations of children's behavior. Each column of labels is used for a different area of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The children's names are pre-printed in each column so that Crystal and Ellen are sure to record an observation about each child in each area of learning. Crystal developed this method of collecting anecdotal records so that she can easily gather information for each child's monthly observation card. The labels are easy to remove from the label sheet and stick in the correct box on the observation card.

As Crystal and Ellen review the children's observation labels in the gross motor skill area, they notice that about a third of the children have not advanced in their ability to engage in play requiring them to use skills such as catching balls. These children often drop balls during indoor games. They quickly lose interest in outdoor games using balls. Crystal and Ellen realize they need to change their teaching to help the children improve coordination to manipulate balls and other objects.

